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T H O U G H T S

Great Britain - Parliament

OCCASIONED BY THE PROPOSED *K*

APPLICATION TO PARLIAMENT

FOR A REPEAL OF THE LAW OF

P A T R O N A G E.

ADDRESSED TO ALL PARTIES IN THE CHURCH

BY A

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THE UNIVERSITY OF

OXFORD

ATTESTATION OF THE

RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY

OF OXFORD



BY

THE RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY

OF OXFORD

IN WITNESS WHEREOF

THE RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY

OF OXFORD

THOUGHTS ON PATRONAGE.

THE present stir about repealing the law of patronage having called up my attention a little to that subject, the following thoughts and observations have occurred relating thereto: As,

I. Said law does not appear, all things considered, to be in fact so great a grievance as some affect to hold it forth to the people: at least, it seems not to deprive men of any Scriptural and Christian right, any right guaranteed unto men by the law of Christ; which has been the great topic of popular declamation against it in this country. What! some will be ready to reply, is it not of Scripture-right for the Christian people to have a free choice of their pastors and teachers? Was not this the apostolical and primitive practice? Sure, the New Testament knows nothing of patronage and presentations. All this is readily admitted: nay, it is so clear, that, I suppose, no sober-minded person, who has read the New Testament with any degree of attention, ever seriously doubted, but that the right of choosing pastors was understood to belong to the multitude of the disciples, or community

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of the faithful, at large, and was exercised by them accordingly. Consequently, if the exemplary practice of the apostolical churches be allowed to be of the nature and force of a law or rule to Christians in all succeeding ages, there can be no doubt but this method ought still to be retained in religious societies formed on the plan and in imitation of those churches. And if this is not admitted, the matter, important as it is to the church of Christ, is left quite ambulatory, without any certain rule to walk by; but which to suppose, seems rather to derogate from the wisdom and care of the church's King and Lawgiver.

But then, what is all this to the present purpose? These primitive pastors and teachers were maintained by the people who chose them. Their whole dependence for their maintenance, so far as they were supplied with that from others, was on the voluntary contributions of the churches which they served. Their electors and maintainers were the same; as will be further noticed afterwards. Since, then, the burden of their maintenance thus lay upon the people among whom they ministered in spiritual things; it was highly reasonable and equitable, that the right of choosing them should be vested in and exercised by the same people. But will it thence follow, that therefore the
people

people have a right to choose those ministers of religion who are otherwise provided for, and toward whose subsistence they contribute nothing? Will any pretend to establish such a right from the New Testament? I should think not. Does it not rather appear to be a matter of right and equity, that they who provide for such ministers should have the power of settling them, or disposing of their own emoluments as they think best? What then shall we think of those who, in the heat of their popular zeal, have gone all the length of claiming this (that is, the calling of ministers toward whose subsistence they are not understood to be in duty bound to contribute), as a matter of right sealed and confirmed to Christians by the blood of Christ?

Nor, consequently, do I see just ground for clamour against a civil government on this head, as any way encroaching on the rights of conscience, on our rights either as men or as Christians, while the door of toleration is kept wide open. For thus, if people are not pleased with the stipendiary ministers of the state, they are left at full liberty to look out for themselves, according to the apostolical and primitive practice, men to their own liking, to watch for their souls, and labour in the word and doctrine among them. Where is the hardship, then? Were the un-

supportable yoke of uniformity-laws wreathed as fast on the necks of the people, obliging them under the heaviest penalties to attend the ministrations of their parish-incumbents, as was the hard case in the last century; I confess the people would have good reason to complain. In this case, the law of patronage might turn out to be a *real*, nay, *intolerable*, grievance. But in our happy times, blessed be God, it is quite otherwise; all British subjects being now allowed to worship, nay, and protected in worshipping, God, according to the light of their own consciences. By a rigorous exercise of the right of patronage, indeed, some people may be stirred up so far to become followers and imitators of the apostolical and primitive churches, as to choose, and contribute for the support of, their own pastors; and in which the state allows them, by the law of toleration. This, in a religious view, cannot certainly be a great evil.

It has been pleaded, the people are allowed to choose their own servants, physicians, &c.; and why not also, nay, much rather, their spiritual instructors? But this is not fair reasoning, as applied to the people of the national church; for they themselves pay their servants and physicians, but not their ministers. Let them therefore pay the latter, as they do the former; and I will venture

ture thus far to promise upon the state, that they shall be left as much to their freedom in the choice of the one as of the other.

II. I apprehend it will prove a matter of considerable difficulty for the opposers of the law of patronage to agree among themselves on another method of settling churches, to be substituted in the room thereof. And indeed no wonder: for, besides their different views and motives in opposing the present method, the making any material alteration in a national establishment of religion, or a church by law established, usually proves a serious matter; and requires no small degree of political sagacity to conduct it. I have somewhere read, that the famous alteration of the established form of church-government in England, last century, cost even the sagacious Cromwell himself no small pains and trouble; and that he is reported to have said, he well knew what to put down, or what ought not to be the authorised form of church-government, referring to the episcopal hierarchy; but was at a loss what to set up in the room thereof. Much the same, I suppose, will be the case with our present *would-be* reformers of the national church of Scotland: however they may agree in abolishing patronage, as being a most unpopular thing, I greatly suspect their being
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of one mind as to what ought to be put in the place thereof. Some will, no doubt, be for carrying it all the length of popular election; which will set them high in the estimation of the people: but others, I dare say, will never agree to this; and which, though they should, the state might have good reasons of policy for not granting. I understand, that one ecclesiastical body, the general kirk-session of the city of Glasgow, which probably means to take a lead in this business, is for adopting that act of the Scotch parliament 1690, which vests the right and power of calling ministers in the town-councils and kirk-sessions of royal boroughs, and in the heritors and elders of country parishes; and which they hold to be a standing law of the land still in force,—as having been ratified by the union-settlement of the two kingdoms, and therefore for ever unalterable. As to this, I beg leave to observe,

(1.) What would this proposed alteration turn out to, but just a change of hands, or an augmentation of the number of patrons? How far such an alteration, were it obtained, would be calculated for serving the cause of *religious* liberty, I shall not say: but if I mistake not, in civil concerns, it is generally reckoned more eligible to lie at the mercy of one despot than a number of petty tyrants.

Whence,

Whence, I believe, absolute monarchy is, in most cases, preferred to an aristocratical form of government.

But be that as it will, this method of settling churches is certainly no less foreign to the New Testament, no less heterogeneous to the church and kingdom of Christ therein described and exhibited, and no less inimical to the supposed rights of the people, than the other. Does the New Testament any more warrant town-councils, heritors, and elders, to present pastors and teachers to Christian churches, than a single patron? If it does, let the passage or passages where it does so be pointed out: but this, I suppose, will not so much as be pretended. And how heterogeneous it is to the nature of Christ's kingdom, which is not of this world, must be obvious to every one who is but in the smallest degree acquainted with that subject. What carnal and mistaken notions of the kingdom of Christ does this scheme go upon! How grossly does it blend and confound that spiritual and heavenly kingdom, with the kingdoms of this world! Which doubtless is a motley mixture, a most heterogeneous composition; no less so than the mixture of the iron and miry clay of Nebuchadnezzar's image. "The church itself," says the immortal Locke (a), "is a thing absolutely
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(a) Letters on Toleration, p. 43.

“lutely separate from the commonwealth.
 “The boundaries on both sides are fixed and
 “immoveable. He jumbles heaven and
 “earth together, the things most remote and
 “opposite, who mixes those societies; which
 “are, in their original, end, business, and
 “in every thing, perfectly distinct, and in-
 “finitely different from each other.”

I would ask the adopters of this plan,
 What place town-councils and heritors, as
 such, hold in the church and kingdom of
 Christ? For my part, it does not appear to
 me, that any such political bodies or world-
 ly characters and descriptions of men are so
 much as known there. The component
 members of town-councils, in their private
 and individual capacity, and those who are
 worldly heritors, may indeed, and some such,
 I hope, really have their part and lot in the
 kingdom of Christ and of God: yet not as
 members of town-councils, or proprietors of
 houses and lands; but as visible saints and
 believers, or as satisfactorily professing the
 faith of Christ, and subjection to him and
 his authority in the gospel. Accordingly, the
 only heritors I find distinguished there, are
 “the rich in faith, and heirs of the king-
 “dom which God hath promised to them
 “that love him;” and who at the same time
 may be “poor in this world (b);” nay, so
 poor

poor and destitute, that, like their great Lord and Master, they may not have where to lay their head, that they can call their own. Such bodies, characters, and descriptions of men, then, clearly belong to the commonwealth, or worldly kingdom, and to that only. But is not the right of electing ministers understood to be a right and privilege purely ecclesiastical, one of the peculiar interests and concerns of the church and kingdom of Christ as such? And if so, how come the abovementioned distinctions and descriptions of men, which obtain only in the commonwealth, to be made the entitling qualification of a right and privilege purely ecclesiastical, and the exercise thereof? It is not certainly their being members of town-councils and heritors that constitute them church-members; and just as little, therefore, can their being so, entitle them to the exercise of any right, power, or privilege, arising from church-membership. This is clear.

As to *elders*; I acknowledge they are an order and description of men known in the church and kingdom of Christ. But in all the New-Testament account of these ecclesiastical officers and of their office-duties, I nowhere find that of their choosing pastors and teachers for their respective churches, either by themselves or in conjunction with heritors, men-

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tioned as a peculiar part of their work. This, doubtless, as above said, belonged to the multitude of the disciples, or the brotherhood of churches at large: in conjunction with whom, indeed, the elders were to act, nay, and take the lead, in this, as well as in all other church-business. I say, *in conjunction with them*; because it is clear, that, in the apostolical and primitive times, church-business was not transacted by the bishops or elders separate and apart from their respective flocks, as is done in later times; but in conjunction with them, and by their suffrage and consent too.

Moreover, this plan is no less inimical to the rights of the Christian people than the other. The Christian people at large, either have a right to choose their own pastors, or they have not. It is certain, that the heads and leaders of the popular party of the church in times past, maintained that they really had such a right, and that *jure divino*. Whence they as much reprobated the mode of settling churches by town-councils, heritors, and elders, as they did by patronages and presentations. And if the present popular party, or those of them who espouse the abovementioned act of the Scotch parliament 1690, think otherwise in this matter, let them openly and honestly avow it; and from this time forward cease from their idle declamations,

tions, in opposing the supporters of the law of patronage, about the rights of the Christian people: since thus, it is manifest, they abandon them as much as the court-party. For although town-councils, heritors, and elders, should be part of the Christian people, sure, they are but a part, not the whole. And thus the supposed rights of the other part, or of the Christian people at large, are entirely given up by these pretended guardians of the people's rights. For it is no matter to me by whom I be stripped of my rights civil or religious, whether by one person or by many, if I really am so.

If it should be alleged, that the town-councils, heritors, and elders, act as the representatives of the body of the people: besides that I am not at all clear, whether, if the right of choosing their own pastors be really inherent in the people, it be competent for them to divest themselves of that right, and delegate it to others:—in order to their sustaining and acting in that character, they must certainly first be chosen by the people themselves, and have their right and power delegated unto them by their own free choice and consent; otherwise they are no more the representatives of the people than the single patron. As to the ideal scheme of *virtual* representation, I suppose it will have expired with the celebrated American controversy.

I know there are sundry objections made to the common people's being allowed the exercise of that right; and some of which, as applied to the whole populace of a national church, I readily admit, are not without their own weight; and which, by the bye, is no great recommendation of national churches to me. Particularly it is objected, "That the common people are not competent judges of doctrine, and other necessary qualifications of ministers; and therefore would make an improper choice for themselves." If the common people of the national church but answer to the character of "the least in the kingdom of heaven," or gospel-church; our LORD himself, the King of that kingdom, has pronounced "them greater than even John the Baptist, than whom a greater had not arisen among them who were born of women before his time (c)." Whence it cannot well be doubted, but they will make a tolerable shift for choosing their own pastors and teachers. But if they nowise answer to that character and description, to be sure, they have neither part nor lot in the kingdom of heaven; nor consequently any thing to do with the peculiar rights and privileges thereof. But whereas the main stress of this objection, as used by some, lies on that of their
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being *common people* simply, I would observe, that it is by no means peculiar to the learned doctors and rulers of our national church to hold the common people in the utmost contempt; but in common to them with the learned doctors and rulers of the national church of the Jews too, in her later, though I cannot say purest, times: "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed (*d*)."

But, for my part, I see no good reason, why those of the common people who habituate themselves to read and meditate in God's word, may not, thro' the teaching and illumination of the divine Spirit, come to be as much proficient in spiritual wisdom and understanding, as great adepts in the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; and consequently as competent judges of sound doctrine, and exemplary correspondent practice, the two grand requisites of a Christian pastor;—as members of town-councils and heritors, who are not obliged to be always the most knowing and intelligent in the concerns either of this life or that which is to come. And what if some of these same despised common people might be met with who, in respect of acquaintance with these Scriptures which are able to make us wise unto salvation, and a true knowledge
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and taste of Bible-religion, should be found, upon impartial trial, not a whit inferior to some of the learned and dignified objectors themselves? This much, at least, we are assured of, " That not many wise men after the
 " flesh, not many mighty, not many noble,
 " are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the
 " wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things
 " which are mighty: and base things of the world, and things which are despised,
 " hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that
 " are: that no flesh should glory in his presence (c)."

It is further objected, " That if popular
 " elections were gone into, popular tumults,
 " anarchy, and confusion, would ensue." And indeed, unless it could be supposed that the whole populace of a nation and kingdom of this world would demean themselves in this business, under the influence of the principles, and agreeably to the rules of the Gospel; this, no doubt, would be the case. But whereas this is scarcely to be expected, for the peace and good order of civil society's sake, I should never wish to see that method adopted in this country; provided always, that the conscientious and thinking part of the
 people,

(c) 1 Cor. i. 26—29.

people, who are inclined to judge of these matters for themselves, (or, if you rather will, the whimsical and capricious, or whatever else you please to call them), if they are not satisfied with the choice made for them, either by the patron, or the town-council, heritors and elders, be allowed otherwise to dispose of themselves, as to them shall appear most conducive to their spiritual edification and comfort; which is the great end of the whole constitution of visible church-order.

(2.) Agreeably to the carnal notion of the kingdom of Christ, or the notion of a worldly ecclesiastical kingdom, implied in this method of settling churches, the abovementioned espousers of it do not make their appeal to, or so much as pretend to derive their authority from, the statute-book of the kingdom of heaven, the New Testament, or the practice of the apostolic churches therein exhibited; but only the law of the land, or the statute-book of the earthly kingdom, with which their church stands connected. They rest entirely on the authority of an act of parliament, ratified, as they suppose it to be, by the union-settlement of the two nations. And indeed so far they act consistently; being well aware that this, as well as many other things essentially belonging to their church by law established, will not bear to be measured by the measuring-reed or line
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of the sanctuary; that is, the word of God. Who is so ignorant as not to know, that a church by law established must be squared and regulated by the laws of that state with which she stands in an immediate connection; and upon which her clergy depend for their emoluments, whether more liberal or more sparing? So that the law of the land must needs be the rule, measure, and standard of all national church-reformations. For if such a church, which is in fact a creature of the state, should at any time prove refractory, and presume to measure herself by any other rule, the state would no doubt throw her off, and turn its sanction and emoluments to some other ecclesiastical body that would be more pliant.

But this will not do with the church and kingdom of Christ as such. For as she immediately holds of JESUS CHRIST as her sole King, Lawgiver, and great Benefactor; so she must in all things be subject to him, and regulated solely by his laws and directions. She, in her ecclesiastical capacity, must know and acknowledge no other legislative power and authority save that of Jesus Christ only. The New Testament, therefore, which contains the laws and statutes of the King of the kingdom of heaven, must be the sole rule and standard of all her endeavours after reformation. "To the law and to the testi-
 "mony;

" many; if they speak not," and act not;
 " according to this word, it is because there
 " is no light in them!" The pattern of Gos-
 pel churches exhibited in the New Testament,
 in their faith and purity, form, worship, dis-
 cipline, and fellowship, and all things per-
 taining to them, is and ought to be the
 standard of all church-reformations in after-
 times: that thus the churches may, in these
 and the like respects, be followers and imi-
 tators of the churches planted and directed
 by the apostles, who in all things had the
 mind of Christ. For there, *viz.* in the New
 Testament, we have " the law of the house,
 " the house of GOD, which is the church of
 " the living GOD." There, either by way of
 doctrine, precept, or example, " is shewed
 " unto us the form of the house, and the fa-
 " shion thereof, and the goings out thereof,
 " and the comings in thereof, and all the
 " forms thereof, and all the ordinances there-
 " of, and all the laws thereof: and these are
 " written, that we may measure the pattern,
 " keep the whole form thereof, and all the
 " ordinances thereof, and do them (*f*)." But
 the reformers of national churches generally
 think of nothing less than measuring and
 conforming to the pattern of churches exhi-
 bited in the New Testament; probably know-
 ing in themselves, that a national church can

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never

(f) Ezek. xliii. 10, 11, 12.

never be so modelled as to be rendered conformable to that pattern. They either go too far back, even all the length of the national church-state of the Jews; which is done away by the erection of the Messiah's kingdom, that extends unto all nations and people; but from which, nevertheless, the idea of national churches under the Gospel seems ultimately to be derived: or they stop short, and do not go far enough back. The most zealous reformers of the national church of Scotland, who have appeared in this century, did not venture further back than the celebrated æra between 1638 and 1650. This, in preference to the apostolic age, or that which immediately followed it, they took up with as the standard-period of their reformation: a period in which strong efforts were made toward forming this national church upon the model of the national church of the Jews. But as the imitation was exceedingly faint, so of very short duration: And notwithstanding all the assiduous endeavours of that body of men I am now referring to, by judicial testimonies, solemn warnings, so many stated annual fasts, preaching and praying, &c. it has never been got revived to this day, and I hope never will. In a word, no national church-reformers, that I know of, have ventured further back in the Christian æra, than the times of Constantine the Great, and the succeeding Christian

Christian emperors; when the face of things in the Christian church, as visible in the world, underwent a most remarkable change: but which times, nevertheless, have generally been panegyricized by churchmen as the commencement of the golden age of the Christian church; and the reason whereof may easily be guessed.

III. Supposing the law of patronage to be a real grievance to this national church, and her popular clergy serious and in good earnest to get rid of it, I would beg leave to advise them, in their proposed application to parliament for that purpose, at the same time to move the legislature to abolish the legal benefices, and leave the ministers of religion to depend for their maintenance on the voluntary contributions of the people among whom they minister. This, in my opinion, would be striking at the root of the evil; and would most probably insure success. Till this measure is adopted, I am afraid the people's right of choosing their own ministers will not be got restored and secured to them: for it is but reasonable to think, that a state will always be interfering one way or other in the disposal of benefices which itself provides. But were it adopted, I flatter myself the good people would be left to their own free choice, without any interference of the state whatever. Such a self-denied application of the

clergy, as it would be a convincing proof of the sincerity of their professed regard for the rights of the Christian people under their inspection; so it would, no doubt, be peculiarly acceptable to government at this juncture, when the national resources are so much exhausted by the late impolitic and ill-fated war which we have been engaged in with America; and of which numbers of the beneficed clergy, these ministers of the Gospel of peace, have been warm partizans. It would probably, therefore, meet the hearty approbation of all the different parties and factions with which the state is so miserably distracted at present.

Nor can I see any scruple of conscience these zealous guardians of the people's rights can possibly have at the measure proposed; because legal benefices to church-ministers appear to be as void of foundation in the New Testament, as the grievance of patronage itself, so loudly complained of; and I am apt to think, too, has been no less prejudicial to the interests of religion. Many of the evils ascribed to patronage by the opposers thereof, I consider as rather originating from this source. And if *that* be a real grievance to some, so is *this* to others; particularly those who are compelled by the law of the land to minister of their worldly substance to teachers of religion of whom they never made choice,

choice, and whose ministrations, for reasons best known to themselves, they do not attend. This much we are sure of, that from the beginning, in the first and best times of Christianity, it was not so. Then there were no worldly advantages secured to the ministers of the gospel, or connected with the ministry of the word, by the legislative power of any nation of this world; no maintenance provided for them by any law but the law of CHRIST, which influences only his willing and obedient people. That was all the tenure or security which Christian pastors had for their living in those days.

"The LORD has indeed ordained, that they who preach the gospel, should live of the "gospel (*g*)."
Where probably the Apostle alludes to that declaration of our LORD in the Gospels—"The workman is worthy of his "meat;—The labourer is worthy of his "hire (*b*)."
But how was this their *living of the gospel* to be ministered to them? Out of a national tax levied of the subjects of an earthly kingdom at large, or certain orders of men therein, whether they be so disposed of themselves, and whether they hear the gospel from them or not? No such thing can be pretended: but only by the voluntary contributions of the people to whom they preached,—under the sole influence, and as a fruit

(*g*) 1 Cor. ix. 14.

(*b*) Mat. x. 10. Luke x. 7.

fruit of that gospel which was preached to them; for this appears to have been one way in which they professed and evidenced their subjection to the gospel of CHRIST. Accordingly, the law and rule of ministers maintenance in the New Testament is thus expressed: "Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good things (i)." "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things (k)?" "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine (l)." From these passages it appears, that recompence was to be given to the ministers of the word by *the taught* according to their respective abilities; either distributively, that is, every one singly and by himself; or, which indeed is more likely, collectively,—the several individuals bringing their contributions for that purpose into the church's treasury, from whence they were distributed by proper persons to the ministers, according to their several labours and necessities. And conform to this law or rule, was the practice in those times of apostolical purity and simplicity. The people willingly ministered to the necessities of their spiritual instructors,

as

(i) Gal. vi. 6.

(k) 1 Cor. ix. 11.

(l) 1 Tim. v. 17.

as a *fruit* (*m*), a visible fruit of the internal influence of the gospel, and of their unfeigned subjection thereto; and also as a token of their love and esteem of them for their work's sake (*n*). And that which they so ministered was "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God (*o*):" A very strong and remarkable expression this. Such things, however narrow and scanty they might be, (and we may be sure many of them were very much so), would nevertheless be sweet in the enjoyment to those "who desired the bishop's office, as in itself a good work (*p*);" and who discharged the duties thereof, and watched for the people's souls, not from lucrative motives, or a prospect of great things for themselves in this life, but in the joyful expectation of a great recompence of reward in a future state (*q*). After the same manner were Christian bishops provided for in the times which immediately succeeded the apostolic age. They were not ashamed to receive all their maintenance as the alms of their hearers; who, as primitive ecclesiastical writers inform us, gave what they gave, not to the ministers themselves immediately, but to the church; out

(*m*) Phil. iv. 17.

(*n*) Compare 1 Thes. v. 13.

with the forecited 1 Tim. v. 17.

(*o*) Phil. iv. 18.

(*p*) 1 Tim. iii. 1.

(*q*) See Dan. xii. 3. Jo. iv. 35, 36.

compared with 1 Pet. v. 2, 3, 4.

but of which the ministers had their portions given them in baskets, and were thence called *sportularii*, "basket-clerks." (It matters not whether the things given be the necessities of life themselves, or something that will prove the means of procuring them.) This manner of being provided for would indeed but ill suit many spruce clergymen in our times: but in those times of primitive simplicity, it was not reckoned out of character. And then, the ministers having got their portions, the overplus of the church's offerings or alms was distributed to the poor. In later times, too, the Waldenses, who were as the seed of the reformation, and who would seem, in some good measure, to have retained the primitive purity and simplicity during the whole reign of Antichrist:—In like manner, I say, they too, according to the scripture-pattern and primitive example, maintained those among them who bore the office of ministers by alms only. Hence their own words, as reported in a certain history of them: "Our food and clothing is sufficiently administered to us by way of gratitude and alms, by the good people whom we teach (r)." And that their ministers might be the less burdensome, and the more serviceable to the people, they generally practised some honest trade, especially physic
and

(r) Morland's History, &c. p. 74.

and surgery. This Morland takes particular notice of, in his History of the Evangelical Churches in the Valleys of Piedmont (s); and which was the more necessary, by reason of the peculiar situation and circumstances of those people.

But thus to live of the Gospel after the apostolical and primitive manner, without the highest human security for it, seems as impossible to many doctors of divinity and national churchmen in our times, as if, (to use the language of a great man in the last century (t), by these words they were bid go eat their Bibles, as Ezekiel and John were their books; and such doctrines as these are as bitter to their bellies too. They appear to be sent forth as poor in faith as many of them are in purse, before they get possession of the legal benefice: for though they style themselves ambassadors of JESUS CHRIST, they cannot trust him with their maintenance in their embassy, unless they have him bound to his promise by the statute-law of a worldly kingdom.

Legal benefices, or a provision for church-ministers by the civil powers, is one of the first-fruits of that unnatural and heterogeneous alliance or connection which came to be formed between the church and the state; and which, in innumerable instances, has

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proved

(s) See page 183.

(t) Milton.

proved so prejudicial to both: but which, nevertheless, is essential to the very being of a national church as such. Of the *alliance* itself, I shall speak more particularly afterwards. This *first-fruit* of said alliance has been greedily grasped by the greater part of churchmen, as a most delicious morsel. Nay, some of them have gone all the length of claiming it from the kings of the earth as a matter of divine right; upon a mistaken, as I suppose, and self-interested interpretation of that ancient prophecy (u): “ And kings
 “ shall be thy nursing-fathers, and their
 “ queens thy nursing-mothers: they shall
 “ bow down to thee with their face toward
 “ the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet.”
 But however beneficial this may have proved to the backs and bellies of the clergy, we are sure, from the event, it has proved a fertile source of mischief to the church of CHRIST, in her true spiritual interests and concerns. Upon the accession of Constantine, a Christian Catechumen, to the imperial dignity, the clergy having once got him buoyed up with the fond conceit of his being the *nurse-father* of the church, in their own sense of that prophetic character of the kings and queens of the Gentiles;—he greatly overdid the matter. Insomuch that the before-referred to great man observes, that “ out of his
 “ zeal,

(u) Isa. xlix: 23.

zeal, thinking he could never be too liberal a nursing-father of the church, might not unfitly be said to have either overlaid or choaked it in the nursing. Which (he adds) was foretold, as is recorded in ecclesiastical traditions, by a voice heard from heaven on the very day that these great donations and church-revenues were given, crying aloud, *This day is poison poured into the church.* Which the event soon after verified; as appears by another no less ancient observation, that *religion brought forth wealth, and the daughter devoured the mother.* And to the same purpose, he produces the testimony and opinion of the Waldenses, "That to endow churches is an evil thing; and that the church then fell off, and turned whore, sitting on that beast in the Revelations, when, under pope Sylvester, she received those temporal donations." Nor is this way of thinking peculiar to intelligent persons of any one description only. For a late learned dignitary of the church of England, whose memory I venerate for that work's sake of his which I am going to refer to (v),—has observed on Daniel xi. 34. which he applies to the times of Constantine, that the help wherewith the church was holpen by him, "is called only *a little help*; because, though it added much

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(v) Bishop Newton on the Prophecies.

“ to the temporal prosperity, yet it contri-
 “ buted little to the spiritual graces and vir-
 “ tues of Christians. It enlarged their reve-
 “ nues, and increased their endowments; but
 “ proved the fatal means of corrupting the
 “ doctrine, and relaxing the discipline of the
 “ church.”

The time would fail me to enumerate all the evils which this innovation, or departure from the apostolical rule and primitive usage of *living of the Gospel*, came to produce in the church. I shall therefore at present only observe, as was passingly hinted before, that many of the evils usually ascribed to the law of patronage are rather, if I mistake not, to be assigned to this cause; at least, without it, it is not likely they would have taken place. For instance, the opposers of this method of settling churches complain loudly, that it opens a door for unfit and unworthy characters to enter into the ministry by; worldly-minded men, who have not the interests of religion or good of the people at heart, but their own ease and convenience only. But is there not the greatest reason to think, that if the legal benefices were done away, this ground of complaint would of course, in a good measure, be removed? It is very certain, that this method of providing for church-ministers, when once it was introduced and established, did in fact prove an allurement

to worldly men to turn their attention to the ministry; not as being a good work in itself, but as having good wages, or because of the state-hire annexed to it. This tempted men who were greedy of filthy lucre, and who sought nothing but their own worldly honour, gain, and ease,—to seek these things from that quarter; thus making a gain of godliness, and turning the holy ministry into a mere engine of accomplishing their own worldly ends: And accordingly they just laid out themselves for it, as men do for any genteel, profitable, and easy secular employment; as, alas! is the case with too many still. How many look upon and train up their children for the ministry, just as any other trade and employment in civil life? And it were well if the persons themselves thus trained up for it did not imbibe and retain the same sentiments on this head with those of their parents or guardians (*w*). And thus the church

(*w*) Milton, after noticing that the pastors of the Waldenses generally studied and professed some honest trade, especially physic and surgery,—makes this remark: “ But our ministers scorn to use a *trade*, and count it the reproach of this age that *tradesmen* preach the gospel. It were to be wished they were all *tradesmen*: they would not then so many of them, for want of another trade, make a *trade* of their *preaching*. They clamour that *tradesmen* preach; and yet *they* preach, while they themselves are the worst *tradesmen* of all.”—I have now for years been so far in this way of thinking myself, that
were

church came to be over-run with the veriest hirelings; "greedy dogs, which could never have enough: they all looked to their own way, every one for his gain from his quarter."—Even where church-livings provided by law cannot be called affluent, and are no more than just a decent subsistence, as I admit those of the church of Scotland, taken on an average, to be, I suppose they will be found to be a much greater allurements to improper persons coming into the ministry, than those which are furnished out of the free contributions of the people; and which, too, may be easily accounted for. I do admit, that, from other motives, unworthy persons may be tempted to enter into the ministry, even where there are no legal benefices: but at the same time I will venture to affirm, that were it not for this, not a few of those presentees of the church of Scotland who are the most unacceptable and obnoxious to the good people, would never once have thought of

were any young person, of whom I had the care and disposal, to insist on being bred a clergyman according to the fashion of the country, although I would not absolutely hinder him; yet, for various reasons, I would make a point of it, that at same time he should learn some honest trade or business,—such as would best suit his own inclinations, and I could afford to give him; and which afterwards he might practise or not, as he should find occasion. And I heartily wish, that many more were in this way of thinking.

of commencing clergymen. And thus this ground of complaint would have been in a good measure prevented; fully as much so as it would be by abolishing the law of patronage. Besides, the grievance of patronage itself had never probably been heard of in the Christian world, had it not been for church-endowments and legal emoluments. The latter, I suppose, gave birth to the former: and must needs therefore be the radical evil, which our national church-reformers, of consequence, ought to begin with, and see to get purged out in the first place; and the other will fall of course.

Again, *simony*, or simoniacal pactions and bargains about church-livings (x), is loudly complained of as another bitter fruit of the law of patronage. But does not this also owe its

(x) The buying and selling of church-livings has been so called from *Simon Magus*, who offered money to the apostles, that he might have power to give the Holy Ghost to any he should lay his hands on. But whereas names do not alter the nature of things, there seems to be a very material difference between purchasing the *Holy Ghost* with money, and purchasing a *living*, consisting of so much a-year provided by a civil government, and the right of disposing it vested in particular persons by that same authority which provided it. Those who conceive of the ministry in a *state-church* in much the same light that they do any other office or employment under the state, civil or military, will not probably see much more evil in purchasing a church-living than any other place, or gainful and genteel employment, in either the civil or military department.

its birth to legal stipends? Were it not for these, I suppose we had never heard of any such practices in the church. Take away these, therefore, and that grievance also will of course cease. In short, all the grievances usually attributed to the law of patronage would be more effectually redressed by abolishing the legal emoluments themselves, than merely that particular mode of disposing them; and would probably be more easily obtained of the state too. So that this is plainly the shortest process, and that which bids fairest for proving successful; and ought therefore seriously to be thought of, and adopted by the aggrieved.

But whereas even the popular clergy of the church may still have objections, of great weight with themselves, to the apostolical and primitive mode of *living of the gospel*, which I have taken the liberty of pointing out to them; I would beg leave to recommend to their serious perusal, a small treatise of the celebrated *Milton*, the author of *Paradise Lost*, which I have different times referred to above: it is intitled, *Considerations touching the likeliest means to remove Hirelings out of the Church*: where this argument is handled at large, and objections satisfactorily answered.

From what is above said, however, I would not wish to be understood by any, as if I thought *all* the clergy of the national church
mere

mere mercenaries and state-hirelings. For
 “ who am I that I should judge another
 “ man’s servant? to his own master he stand-
 “ eth or falleth.” Besides, there are indivi-
 duals of that class of men that I have the
 pleasure of being personally acquainted with,
 whom I sincerely esteem, not only on account
 of their good sense, their sobriety and de-
 cency of manners, their liberality of senti-
 ment and civilities to conscientious and dis-
 creet dissenters with whom they happen to
 be conversant in civil life, &c. but also, as I
 candidly suppose, a conscientious and faith-
 ful discharge of the work of the ministry, ac-
 cording to their own light. And in so far as
 they, or any of them, bring the uncorrupted
 doctrine of CHRIST and his apostles with
 them, and hold forth the words of eternal
 life to the people, that they may be saved; so
 far I heartily wish and pray them GOD speed,
 however differently they and I may think
 about national-churches, state-hire, and cer-
 tain other things; to which, perhaps, their
 thoughts may not have been particularly call-
 ed up and directed; or, as to which, they may
 hitherto have thought amiss and been mistaken.
 And indeed who, in the present state of im-
 perfection, is not liable to error and mistake?
 I know too, that the prejudices of education,
 and the influence of prevailing custom, &c.

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are not easily eradicated and got the better of.

IV. I now proceed to speak more particularly of the abovementioned *alliance*, or connection, between church and state, itself; from which *legal benefices*, *patronages*, and many other things utterly unknown in the apostolical and primitive times, have originated. The fullest and most intelligible account of this wonderful affair, in its nature, principles, and consequences, that I have met with, is that given by the late most learned bishop of Gloucester. I have not, however, seen the treatise itself which bears that title; but only the epitome he has given of the doctrine thereof, in that other most elaborate work of his intitled *The Divine Legation of Moses*, Book II. sect. 5. Of this I now mean to give an abridged view, with remarks thereon as I go along.

The bishop allows this *alliance* to be *artificial*, not *natural*; the mere effect of human art and contrivance: and styles it a “master-piece of human policy;” as most certainly it is. Thus he does not claim a *divine right* for it; which is so far fair and honest. The general nature of it he makes to lie in “an union, coalition, or artful insertion of “civil policy and religion, or of the civil and “religious society, into each other.” It was formed and gone into, he says, upon principles of mutual support and advantage to both.

both societies, that is, both the civil and religious: which mutual advantages, he insists, could not have been reached by a mere *juxta-position* of the two, without some union, some coalition, some artful insertion into each other. But as to this, I beg leave to differ from his lordship: for I am persuaded, that civil and religious society, or the church, that is, the church of CHRIST, and the state, would have reaped all the advantages that ever the Author of both intended they should mutually derive from each other, by what, I suppose, he means by a *juxta-position*; as I may have occasion further to notice afterwards.

He very properly maintains, that these two societies are in themselves, and their own nature, (1.) Entirely *different and distinct*. They are so particularly in respect of their *proper ends*, and *the means* of attaining these ends. The genuine, precise, and determinate end of civil society being *the security of the temporal liberty and property of man*; so that its care extends only to the body and the concerns thereof: whereas the *immediate end* of religious society, or a church, is *the purity of religion*, and its *ultimate end the salvation of souls*; so that its care extends only to the soul and the concerns thereof (y). *The means*, again, by which the former ac-

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(y) This is largely and judiciously handled by Locke in his first Letter on Toleration.

complies its end, is *civil coercion*, or *coactive power*; whereas that is altogether unapt for reaching the end of the other. (2.) *Sovereign and independent one of another*. He justly observes here, that the absurdity in politics, called *imperium in imperio*, cannot apply to the natural independency of the church on the state: because, though the same people compose both societies, yet the imperium of the one does not interfere with the imperium of the other. “ Civil and religious society “ (says he) having ends and means entirely “ different, and the means of civil society “ being coercive power, which power therefore the religious consequently had not; it “ follows, that the administration of each society is exercised in so remote spheres, that “ they can never possibly meet to clash: and “ those societies which never clash, necessity of state can never bring into dependency on one another.” Thus far I am perfectly agreed with the bishop.

From all which he concludes, that such alliance, therefore, could only be formed by *free convention and mutual compact*; because, whatever is sovereign and independent cannot be brought to act without its own consent. But I would gladly know, by what authority the parties negotiated this treaty, and settled this alliance? “ Such then (adds “ he) is the nature of that famous union, “ which

“ which produces a religion by law establish-
 “ ed.” Which, as applied to the Christian
 religion, sounds rather harsh; and looks
 like a monstrous production: for it does not
 appear, that ever the pure and heavenly reli-
 gion of Jesus was intended to be an object
 of human legislation; nor does it stand in
 any need of a human establishment.

An alliance by free convention, being in
 its nature such that each party must have its
 motives for compacting, the bishop pro-
 ceeds to inquire what these motives were
 which the state had for seeking, and the
 church for accepting, the offers of this union;
 and what the mutual advantages gained
 thereby are. The motives of the state, he
 says, are threefold.

(1.) To preserve the essence and purity of
 “ religion.” He makes the preservation not
 merely of the *purity*, but of the very *being* of
 religion, to depend on its being taken under
 the protection of the state; but for which he
 produces no higher or better authority, than
 a quotation from *Wollaston's Religion of Na-
 ture delineated*. It is truly surprising, that a
 man of that learned writer's abilities and pe-
 netration did not see what a mighty handle
 this reasoning of his, as applied to the Chri-
 stian religion, gave to his antagonists the
 Deists. For if it could not support itself in
 the world without the aid of the secular
 arm,

arm, that was certainly a strong presumption against its divine original and authority. What a pity is it that, when professedly pleading the cause of revealed religion, he should have given it so mortal a blow! And indeed though they should not all be so explicit this way as the bishop, yet doubtless some such idea lies at the bottom with the zealous advocates for civil establishments of the Christian religion, or that particular profession of it which they may have espoused; otherwise, why should they be so very earnest for the aid and support of the secular powers being applied to it? This reminds me of the terrible alarm the people of this country were lately under for their religion, occasioned by the proposal of a partial repeal of the severe penal laws against Papists. Whereas our divine religion requires no more of the secular powers, but just that they let it alone: in which case, it will shine in its own light, and prevail by its own evidence; altogether unadorned by human wisdom, and unenforced by human power. So, in fact, it did for 300 years; when, instead of being supported, it was persecuted and suppressed by the then ruling powers. And if, during this period, certain lesser innovations and corruptions had crept into the church and the visible profession of Christianity; were these reformed, and greater purity

purity preserved, by the so-much boasted alliance which came to be formed between church and state, under Constantine and the succeeding Christian emperors? Surely, no one will say so who is in the least acquainted with the ecclesiastical history of those times. So that the learned prelate's reasoning here is contrary to well-known and attested fact. Besides, what security have we that civil rulers will prove so faithful guardians of religion, and the purity thereof, as this sort of reasoning supposes? We generally find that order of men as indifferent about religion as their neighbours, any further than it may be made to serve the purposes of civil policy. The bishop himself was aware of an objection from this quarter. And therefore, after asserting, that "it is impossible, under this civil influence, for religion ever to deviate far from truth;" he adds this qualification, "always supposing, for on such a supposition this whole theory proceeds, a *legitimate* government, or civil policy, established on the principles of the natural rights and liberties of mankind: for an unequal and unjust government, which seeks its own, not public utility, will always have occasion for errors, and so must corrupt religion to serve its own wrong interests." Now, to let the bishop have it his own way; are there not

not many such unequal and unjust governments in the world? Himself admits it: for, says he elsewhere, "it is notorious, that the far greater part of civil policies are constituted on different principles, and for different ends." And will not *these*, as well as the others, claim as their indisputable right the care and ordering of religion? Where, then, is our security for the preservation of the purity of religion in such hands? Besides, in the very best of civil governments, if the governors attend properly to matters of state, and to the temporal interests of the governed, I should think they would have enough to do, without the additional burden of the care and management of religion.

How much juster and nobler are the sentiments and reasonings of another great man well known in the learned world, on this subject (z)? "Truth certainly would do well enough if she were once left to herself. She seldom hath received, and I fear never will receive, much assistance from the power of great men, to whom she is but rarely known, and more rarely welcome. She is not taught by laws, nor hath she any need of force, to procure her entrance into the minds of men. Errors indeed prevail by the assistance of foreign
" and

(z) Locke, in his Letters on Toleration.

“ and borrowed succours: but if truth make
 “ not her way into the understanding by her
 “ own light, she will be but the weaker for
 “ any borrowed force violence can add to
 “ her. The Christian religion, in its first
 “ appearance in the world, and for several
 “ hundreds of years after, was better pre-
 “ served, more widely propagated, in pro-
 “ portion, and rendered more fruitful in the
 “ lives of its professors, than ever since;
 “ though then Jews and Pagans were tolera-
 “ ted, and more than tolerated, by the go-
 “ vernments of those places where it grew
 “ up. I hope, you do not imagine the
 “ Christian religion hath lost any of its
 “ first beauty, force, or reasonableness, by
 “ having been almost two thousand years in
 “ the world, that you should fear it would
 “ be less able now to shift for itself without
 “ the help of force. I doubt not but you
 “ look upon it still to be *the power of God*
 “ *and the wisdom of God for our salvation*;
 “ and therefore cannot suspect it less ca-
 “ pable to prevail now by its own truth
 “ and light, than it did in the first ages of
 “ the church, when poor contemptible men,
 “ without authority, or the countenance of
 “ authority, had alone the care of it. This,
 “ as I take it, has been made use of by
 “ Christians in general as an argument for
 “ the truth of the Christian religion, that it
 F “ grew,

“ grew, and spread, and prevailed, without
 “ any aid from force, or the assistance of the
 “ powers in being. And if it be a mark of
 “ true religion, that it will prevail by its own
 “ light and strength, but that false religions
 “ will not, but have need of force and fo-
 “ reign helps to support them; nothing cer-
 “ tainly can be more for the advantage of
 “ true religion, than to take away compul-
 “ sion every where. The inventions of men
 “ in religion need the force and help of
 “ men to support them; A religion that is
 “ of God wants not the assistance of human
 “ authority to make it prevail.” Here, I must
 think, the philosopher has greatly the better
 of the divine, the layman of the dignified
 ecclesiastic.

(2.) “ As the necessary means to improve
 “ the usefulness, and to apply the influence
 “ of religion in the best manner;” viz. for
 the purposes of civil society. “ And this,”
 he attempts to show, “ it does several ways.”
 But whereas Christianity was never intended
 to be an engine of civil policy, in which
 light the bishop seems chiefly to consider re-
 ligion; I must think, that civil government
 would have reaped all the lawful advantages
 from the Christian religion which it can be
 supposed to derive from thence, though no
 such alliance or coalition had ever taken
 place. For this religion, however discon-
 nected

needed from, nay, and discountenanced by, the state, uniformly teaches and inculcates *subjection to the powers that be, and obedience to magistrates, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake ;—submission to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake ; whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as those who are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well ;—to render to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour* (a). It strictly enjoins all the moral and relative duties ; and enforces them with the most powerful motives. So that those whose temper and conduct are formed on the true spirit and maxims thereof, must needs be good members of civil society, and that for conscience sake.

(3.) “ As the only means of preventing the mischiefs that, in its natural independent condition, the church might occasion to civil society.” But pray, what mischief did the church of CHRIST, in its natural independent condition, occasion to civil society the first 300 years before it was brought into any such unnatural coalition with the state? It has been remarked by some, greatly to the honour of the primitive Christians, and I suppose very justly, that, in all the commotions and seditions which

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(a) Rom. xiii. 1—7. 1 Pet. iii. 13—15.

then happened in the empire, no Christians were to be found concerned; and that although the church then was not merely unallied to, but even persecuted by, the state. It is truly acting out of character, for Christians, at any time, to be movers and ring-leaders in sedition. And at this present time, are there not to be found among the merely tolerated religions in Britain, as good and loyal subjects as any the established religions can pretend to boast of?"

While churches, or religious societies, keep within their own proper sphere, and mind their own matters, the state cannot possibly have any thing to fear from them. And if at any time they should go beyond their own proper limits, so as to intermeddle with matters of civil policy, and become the authors and abettors of sedition; all orders of men, ecclesiastics as well as others, being subject to the civil powers in all civil concerns, they lawfully may, and indeed ought to call them to order. And whereas the civil magistrate is armed with a coercive power, and bears not the sword in vain; he can never be without the proper means of suppressing such disorderly proceedings. It is true, ecclesiastical history furnishes us with instances of ministers of an *established religion* having the effrontery to appeal from the civil to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, when accused of teaching

ing sedition and treason ; on this pretence, that the magistrate is not a competent judge of doctrine. But the civil power, properly exerted, can never be at a loss to check and chastise such impertinence in ecclesiastics, whether they be of the established or tolerated religions. The bishop might with great propriety be asked here, If the state never felt any inconvenience from the people, and particularly the clergy, of an established religion ? This, were he alive to answer, he could not refuse : for himself has remarked, “ that we have seen, and yet do see, “ some religious societies, supported by and “ united with the state, which have by “ strange arts brought the state into subjection, and become its tyrants and usurpers ; “ and thereby defeated all the good that can “ arise from this alliance.”

On the other hand, the motives of the church for accepting this alliance, he comprehends in this general, viz. “ security and “ protection from all outward violence.” But a settled provision for the ministers of the church is also understood ; as appears from the sequel. “ There are but other two considerations, (he says,) that can be thought “ motives : the one to engage the state to “ propagate the established religion by civil “ force ; and the other to bestow honours, “ riches, and power, on the church.” Both
which

which he very deservedly reprobates. And in reprobating the latter, we must suppose our dignified author did not consider the revenues of a bishopric in the church of England, with a seat in the supreme court of a great worldly kingdom, as meriting the appellation of riches and honour. But be that as it will, without any such alliance, the church would certainly enjoy protection from a civil government, enlightened in, and established upon, the rights and liberties of mankind: for this reason, that liberty of conscience, or liberty to profess religion according to the dictates of people's own consciences, is a natural right of mankind; for the protection of which, therefore, as well as of other natural rights, civil society and civil government were instituted. The bishop admits this much while he says, "The state indeed could not justly offer any violence to the church, had this alliance never been made:" but which, however, he does not consider as a good reason, why the church should not secure this its natural right by compact; especially as, by this compact, the state is bound, not only not to hurt the church confederated, but to serve it, that is, protect it from the injuries of other religious societies. But the bishop must certainly have known, that upon the very same principle of the natural rights and liberties of mankind,

on which the state was not itself to hurt the church, as little was it to suffer her to be hurt from any other quarter: and particularly not to suffer one religious society to invade the rights of, or injure and disturb another, on any pretence whatever, though no such confederation had ever taken place. The civil magistrate, as guardian of the rights and liberties of his subjects at large, and not any one particular sect or party of them only, and as maintainer of the peace and good order of civil society, is certainly in duty bound to lay out himself to restrain and suppress all such incroachments and abuses. I shall only add here, that a church secured from outward suffering by all the power and policy of a worldly kingdom engaged on its side by formal treaty and compact, seems but ill to agree with the suffering lot of the church of CHRIST in the present state exhibited to us in the New Testament, but which our author does not appear to have thought much of. Such a mean appearance of the church did not suit his views; as indeed it does not the views of national churchmen in general.

“ On these mutual motives (adds he) it
 “ was that this famous alliance was formed,
 “ which gave birth to *a church by law esta-*
 “ *blished.*” Which, as applied to a Christian
 church, to me indeed appears to be a mon-
 strous

stuous birth; and which accordingly at length grew up into the horrible monster described in the visions and revelations of John (b).

“ From the motives thereto, it appears, that the great preliminary or fundamental article of the alliance is, that *the church shall apply all its influence in the service of the state; and that the state shall protect and support the church.*”

“ But, in order to the performance of the agreement, there must necessarily be a *mutual communication of their respective powers; for the province of each society being naturally distinct and different, each can have to do in the other's only by mutual concession. Again, these societies being likewise naturally independent the one of the other, a mutual concession cannot be safely made, without one of them, at the same time, giving up to the other its right of independency.*” In respect of the latter, I am perfectly agreed with the bishop. For, upon lordly and ambitious churchmen being vested with the power, the coercive power of the state, how dreadful would it be for mankind, if they were not at the same time divested of their right of independency! The experience of past ages proves this. The English parliament was aware of it in the last cen-

(b) “ 'Tis a scandal and a blemish to talk of a Gospel-church as by law established.” *Bradbury's Sermons.*

century: for though the necessity of the times compelled it to give the civil sanction to Scotch Presbytery; yet as it claimed a coercive power to its courts, that parliament was too wise to allow it an independent jurisdiction, but subjected the supreme court of that ecclesiastical subordination to the high court of parliament, as the dernier resort in all ecclesiastical affairs; and which fretted the Presbyterians not a little.

“ Now, from these two conclusions, (adds the bishop), which spring necessarily from *the great fundamental article of union*, we consequentially deduce all the terms, conditions, mutual grants, and concessions, which complete this alliance.”

First, on the part of the church, or “ what the church receives from the state by virtue of this alliance.”

1. “ A public and settled endowment for the clergy.” A very sensible one indeed for that order of men. He does not, it is true, claim this as a matter of divine right. Nor could he well do so; since it is so manifest a departure from the apostolical rule and primitive usage of living of the gospel; as I have showed before. However, he assigns other reasons for it: (1.) “ To render the religious society more permanent and durable.” As if the church built upon a rock by CHRIST himself, and against which, he says, the gates of hell shall not be able to prevail, could not be sufficiently

ficiently firm and permanent without a revenue settled by law upon the clergy.
 (2.) "To invite and encourage the clergy's
 "best service to the state in rendering those
 "committed to their care virtuous." Which
 certainly implies no very honourable idea of
 that order of men, intimating them to be a
 set of mere mercenaries, who will not make
 conscience of doing their duty unless they
 be bribed to it. "But, (3.) and princi-
 "pally, In order to destroy that mutual de-
 "pendency between the clergy and people
 "which arises from the former's being main-
 "tained by the voluntary contribution of
 "the latter; the only maintenance the cler-
 "gy could have before the two societies were
 "allied; and which dependence we have
 "shown to be productive of great mischiefs
 "to the state." This is a dependence, I know,
 which is much dreaded and abhorred by
 the far greater part of national church cler-
 gymen. But as it is a dependence which
 has the sanction of apostolical institution and
 primitive practice, I see no reason why
 preachers of the apostolical and primitive
 Gospel should either be ashamed of or dis-
 like it. Whereas the bishop says, it has
 been productive of great mischiefs to the
 state: I would ask, What mischiefs it was
 productive of to the state the first 300 years
 of the Christian church, when this depen-
 dence was in its full force? Further, I doubt
 much

much if the state has ever sustained more mischief from those teachers of religion who depended on the people for their maintenance, than it has done from those who depended on itself. At any rate, I may venture to affirm, that it has not sustained more mischief from the clergy's dependence on the people, than the church has sustained from their dependence on the state.

2. "A place in the legislature for her representatives the clergy." This high privilege of the alliance, indeed, the clergy of our Presbyterian church by law established have not claimed. The civil places and power of churchmen were of old time found to be inconsistent with the national covenant of Scotland, and therefore exploded. Nor do our present Scotch clergy, who may not reckon themselves so strictly bound by that same covenant, put in their claim for it; beside other reasons perhaps for this; their livings are so very moderate, that, as the world now goes, they could but ill afford to reside at London, and carry out the port of British senators.

3. "An ecclesiastical jurisdiction, enforced by civil coactive power, for the reformation of manners." Whence the church came literally to be "terrible as an army with banners." The ecclesiastical jurisdiction, thus armed, grew up into an en-

gine of the greatest tyranny and oppression over both the bodies and consciences of men; witness the tortures of the Inquisition, the genuine brood thereof. Nay, and what "a fearful thing was it to fall into the hands" of even the Protestant church-courts of Britain, more especially of England, armed with this coactive power! Both bishops courts and Presbyterian kirk-courts were then terrible. Even in Scotland, if a person was excommunicated by the church-courts *for any cause whatever*, if he did not profess repentance within 40 days, he was declared his Majesty's rebel, put to the horn, and all his worldly substance confiscated for the use of the public. What a mercy is it, then, that the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of this country is now deprived of that coercive power!

4. "If there be a diversity of religions, a test-law for the security of the established one." Our author indeed allows the other religions to be tolerated, which is so far well; but insists upon the necessity of a test-law, whereby those of the tolerated religions are barred out from all manner of places, posts, and offices, civil or military, in the state. And thus, for the security, or rather aggrandisement, of a church by law established, men must so far be deprived of their natural and civil rights, particularly a
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capacity or *capability* of serving the state in offices and employments which they might otherwise have been chosen or called unto. The test fixed upon by the church of England was the *sacramental* one; whereby the sacred institution of our Lord's Supper is horridly perverted and abused. The absurdity and impiety of this has been exposed by many. And that fixed upon by our Scotch covenanting ancestors, was the solemn swearing and subscribing of the covenants national and solemn league; which was made both the term of church-communion, and the condition of holding all manner of offices in the state; and which was equally iniquitous with the other: although there be a numerous body among us still who stand forth zealous advocates for that measure. But, contend for religious tests in civil society who will, I am fully satisfied, that, as one expresses it, "Religious conditions for civil offices are but a revival of an old law, that *no man shall buy or sell, but he that has the mark of the beast*," Rev. xiii. 17. (b).

The Bishop, however, is so full of an *established religion and a test-law*, as indeed the most part of national churchmen are, that he tells us, "This is the universal voice of nature." But does not attempt to produce any higher or better authority for it, than the
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prevailing practice of the heathen world; and in particular, these two instances. " In the " Democracy of Athens, so humane and free," but at the same time much addicted to superstition and idolatry, " there was a test " exacted of all the citizens; in which they " swore to protect their country and their " religion, and to conform to the national religion." The other is a most intolerant and persecuting speech of the consul *Posthumius*, reported in *Livy*.

Secondly, On the part of the state, or what the church surrenders and gives up to it. " It is, in a word, this: *The making the civil " magistrate her supreme head, without whose " approbation and allowance she can direct, order, and decree nothing.* For the state having by this alliance undertaken the protection of the church, and protection not being to be afforded to any person or body without power over that person or body in the person or body protecting; it necessarily follows, that the civil magistrate must be supreme: Therefore, when protection is afforded, it must be at the same time provided, that no alteration be made therein," that is, in the church, and her doctrine and discipline, " without the state's allowance. Further, the state having endowed its clergy, and bestowed upon it a jurisdiction with coactive power; these are privileges
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“leges that might be perverted to the infinite damage of the state, had not the civil magistrate, in return, *the supremacy of the church.*” This reasoning of the bishop upon the principle of *the alliance* seems rational and just; and therefore confirms me in my dislike of national churches. The bishop does not mince the matter here; but fairly and candidly owns a church by law established to be a mere limb of the state,—subjected as a church, and in all ecclesiastical concerns, to the civil magistrate; which, however, implied as it is in the alliance itself, some of the advocates for national churches, for prudential reasons, no doubt, will not admit or avow.

Thus *the church by law established* ceases to be that church of which JESUS CHRIST is the Head, the alone Head of rule and government, or the sole King and Lawgiver. She, as a visible society, is no longer under the sole direction of JESUS CHRIST and his laws, but of the civil magistrate and his laws. She, in effect, knows no king but Cæsar; at least she, in her ecclesiastical capacity, does know and acknowledge Cæsar for her king. In such a church, it is not enough that there is a law of the kingdom of heaven warranting and authorising such and such a thing, unless there be also a law of the land, or worldly kingdom. Not so much the law of CHRIST,
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as that of the civil magistrate, is the instrument of her government, and the rule of her procedure. This then being the case, why should any of the patrons of national churches and national schemes of religion, complain of Erastian encroachments of the state, upon the rights, powers, and privileges of the church, or upon the kingly power and prerogatives of JESUS CHRIST? since these things are, either more explicitly or more implicitly, connected by churchmen unto the civil magistrate, in return for the protection, provision, and other favours, which they derive from him.

Having thus taken a view of the *famous alliance* between church and state, which in one shape or other has been so zealously contended for by the most of churchmen in latter times, I would now, upon the whole, ask, [1.] By what authority any orders of men came to form such an alliance between the church of CHRIST and the states and empires of this world? If CHRIST himself has commissioned and authorised them so to do, let them produce their commission and powers from the New Testament. But if this cannot be done, the thing itself must be held for a mere device and invention of men; which indeed the bishop candidly admits it to be, and must be treated accordingly.

“ Moses had not power to add a pin, or a
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"curtain, to the tabernacle: *See thou do* (says
 "God) *according to the pattern shown thee*
 "in the Mount. And if CHRIST has left any
 "thing undone for princes to alter, or priests
 "to finish, he cannot be counted worthy of
 "more honour than Moses, who was faith-
 "ful to him that appointed him (*d*)."
 [2.] If the church and kingdom of CHRIST allied
 to the state, on the abovementioned or other
 such like terms and conditions, has not un-
 dergone so many and great alterations and
 changes, as to be a very different thing from
 what it was as it first appeared in the world
 in the days of CHRIST and his apostles? This
 certainly cannot be refused by any one who
 has read the New Testament with care. Now
 these alterations must be either to the better
 or the worse. To suppose the former, would
 be to derogate greatly from the wisdom of
 the all-wise Head; as if the wisdom of men
 could model and fashion the church to bet-
 ter purpose than He and his apostles set it
 up, and left it in the world. If to the worse,
 as I am persuaded they are, then are they to
 be avoided, and the original plan of Gospel-
 churches exhibited in the New Testament
 adhered to. [3.] If the church, thus altered
 and new-modelled, does not, as a visible so-
 ciety, in effect cease to be the kingdom of
 CHRIST, in which he reigns as sole King and

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(d) Bradbury's Sermons.

Lawgiver, without rival or coadjutor, and become the kingdom of statemen and churchmen, who divide it between them? It is said in the prophecies of Daniel (e), That " the kingdom given to the SON OF MAN, is an everlasting kingdom, which shall not pass away." A church by law established, in consequence of the above-described alliance, cannot therefore be that kingdom; because the dominion of it is in fact passed away from the SON OF MAN into the hands of the potsherds of the earth, who reign therein as kings in their own kingdom. These are considerations which ought to call up the attention of the disciples of CHRIST who may happen to be connected with national churches; as I have no manner of doubt but many of them are (f).

(e) Chap. vii. ver. 14.

(f) See to the above purposes, the masterly, and I think unanswerable, reasonings of bishop Hoadly, in his *Sermon before the King*, from Jo. xviii. 36. and which are further pursued and enlarged in his *Answer to the Representation of the Lower House of Convocation*, and others of his writings in that celebrated controversy among the clergy of the church of England, about the nature of *Christ's kingdom, church-authority, and the rights of mankind*, in which that prelate bore so distinguished and glorious a part, as still renders his memory dear to many. May these high points, wherein we are so deeply interested both as men and Christians, never want such bold and able defenders in the world, and in Britain in particular! And unto him who is both King of nations and King of saints, be all the praise.

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